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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: current challenges and forward-looking strategies for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls

Statement presented by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, a non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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Statement

On the occasion of the 10-year Review and Appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) takes this opportunity to express its unequivocal support for the Platform and its full implementation. Since its inception in 1915, WILPF has worked to prevent armed conflicts and to establish the conditions for sustainable peace on a global scale. As an NGO with consultative status, WILPF has vigorously participated in all of the United Nations-sponsored World Conferences on Women. In light of its historical work, WILPF continues to affirm the struggle for full recognition and fulfillment of women's human rights, including economic, social and sexual rights.

WILPF understands that the perpetration of violence against women falls along a continuum. Economic, sexual and political violence against women is retaught from generation to generation in all countries in a paradigm of societal power held and created to benefit boys and men. We call upon States to recognize that unequal economic stakeholding, including unequal ownership and control of land, credit and resources, not only constitutes violence in and of itself, but also allows men and boys to perpetrate violence against women and girls who are economically dependent upon them. This dynamic is exacerbated by armed conflict and growing religious fundamentalism, and most impacts marginalized women, including widows, indigenous and minority women, who are often at risk of violence perpetrated by paternalistic or misogynist State or non-State actors.

In the 1985 Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies, participating States recognized: "Peace cannot be realized under conditions of economic and sexual inequality, denial of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, deliberate exploitation of large sectors of the population, unequal development of countries, and exploitative economic relations."

The Beijing Declaration, adopted 10 years later, reiterated that "women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace," the outcomes envisioned by the Beijing Platform for Action and the U.N. Decade for Women.

WILPF applauds the steps taken by the United Nations toward realizing this vision. In particular, we take pleasure in noting the coming into force of the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers in 2003, the designation of the years 2001-2010 as the U.N. Decade for the Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, the establishment of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI); the convening of the twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly, entitled Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-first Century, and the UN Security Council's adoption of UN Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in October 2000. We celebrate the work of UN entities to integrate a gender perspective in their work, including that on peace and security and the Millennium Development Goals, and encourage further gender mainstreaming through the development and implementation of comprehensive gender action plans. We expect the integration of a gender perspective during the assessment of the Millennium Development Goals during the Millennium Summit later this year.

We also call on Member States to integrate a gender perspective into the work of all ministries at the national level. WILPF recognizes the achievements of national governments, such as Namibia, South Africa and Rwanda, that have adopted innovative institutional mechanisms, such as gender budgeting and quota systems for candidate lists, to further all women's enjoyment of their human rights and quicken the realization of women's full equality.

WILPF calls on Member States to invest in human security and the construction of peace, and to end impunity enjoyed by war profiteers, organized crime syndicates and those who traffick and purchase persons. We call on national governments, including those that act as donors and mediators, to make use of the strategic objectives and actions enumerated in the critical area of concern of the Platform, entitled Women and armed conflict, and UNSCR 1325 as a means of supporting the realization of women's rights in all governmental programs and processes.

WILPF Sections have observed how the economic policies of privatization and free trade agreements continue to impoverish the large majority of the world's peoples, to displace women, men, girls and boys from or within their countries and to compromise the sustainability of the Earth's resources. We call on the United Nations, Member States, regional bodies and international financial institutions to seek institutional collaboration to formulate economic policies in a human rights framework.

WILPF does not support the Explanation of Position that the United States (US) government has put forward at the regional meetings in preparation for the Review and Appraisal of the BPFA or any national legislative action that undermines human security, including women's economic security and sexual autonomy. We call on the United States to reaffirm and implement the BPFA. Further, WILPF calls on the United States to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. WILPF welcomes attempts by Member States to hold the US government accountable to its international commitments, including those that the US has made through its ratification of the Convention on Torture, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

As WILPF nears the 90th anniversary of its birth at The Hague, we continue to work for the achievement of conditions necessary for ongoing collaborative efforts among actors from civil society, governments, international financial institutions and the United Nations to work towards collective human security, and away from militarism and economic violence. In this spirit, we look forward to continuing to work with our sisters and brothers around the world to eradicate all forms of discrimination and social structures resulting in women's subordination, and to create the conditions for a healthy planet and sustainable peace.